

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 177226

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177226

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: CANCELLATION OF PASSPORTS OF INDIANS RESIDENT IN
U.S.

1. THE INDIAN EMBASSY HAS SENT LETTERS TO SEVERAL INDIANS
IN THE U.S. WHO HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF THE EMERGENCY, INFORM-
ING THEM THAT THEIR PASSPORTS HAVE BEEN INVALIDATED. AL-
THOUGH THE LETTERS GIVE NO REASON, AN EMBASSY SPOKESMAN
HAS STATED THAT THIS ACTION IS BEING TAKEN UNDER INDIAN
LAW WHICH PROVIDES FOR REVOCATION OF PASSPORTS "IN THE
PUBLIC INTEREST." EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER DESAI TOLD US
GOI WAS ACTING AGAINST ANTI-MRS. GANDHI INDIVIDUALS WHO
WERE ACTIVE OPPONENTS OF EMERGENCY IN U.S. AND LEFT IM-
PLICATION THAT GOI HOPED ACTION WOULD SILENCE OTHER WOULD-
BE CRITICS. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT IDEA WAS "BRAINCHILD"
OF AMBASSADOR KAUL HIMSELF. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY MORE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 177226

LETTERS HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE SENT.

2. THE NEW YORK TIMES AND OTHER PAPERS REPORTED JULY 13 THAT SRIKUMAR PODDAR, "A WEALTHY MICHIGAN BUSINESSMAN AND PUBLISHER" HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO RECEIVE SUCH A LETTER. AN "INDIANS FOR DEMOCRACY" REPRESENTATIVE HAS INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT OF TWO FURTHER LETTERS RECEIVED BY WASHINGTON-AREA RESIDENTS, SHARON NANDI AND DR. RAM GEHANI. ALL

THREE ARE PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIENS. "INDIANS FOR DEMOCRACY" REPORTEDLY CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON TO PUBLICIZE THESE TWO CASES, BUT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PRESS REACTION. INS HAS RECEIVED SOME INQUIRIES BUT DEPARTMENT HAS NOT TO DATE.

3. FOLLOWING IS CONTINGENCY GUIDANCE DEVELOPED IN CASE OF INQUIRIES TO DEPARTMENT. QUOTE

Q. AT LEAST THREE INDIAN CITIZENS RESIDENT IN THE U.S. HAVE RECEIVED NOTICES THAT THEIR PASSPORTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT, APPARENTLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE CRITICIZED MRS. GANDHI AND THE EMERGENCY. WHAT WILL BECOME OF THESE PEOPLE?

A. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE INDIVIDUALS ARE LEGALLY IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THE PASSPORT CANCELLATION WOULD NOT AFFECT THIS. ANY APPLICATION FOR A CHANGE IN STATUS WOULD HAVE TO BE EXAMINED ON ITS MERITS BY THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE.

Q. WILL THEY BE GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM?

A. WE WOULD RATHER NOT SPECULATE IN THE ABSENCE OF AN APPLICATION FOR ASYLUM. (IF PRESSED) AS A MATTER OF POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL LAW, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DOES NOT FORCE ANYONE TO RETURN TO A COUNTRY WHERE HE WOULD BE IN DANGER OF IMPRISONMENT OR MISTREATMENT FOR POLITICAL REASONS. UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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